

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for harvesting an artery comprising:

providing an instrument having a handle and a long slender rod including first and second segments that define an obtuse angle therebetween, at least one of the segments being substantially coaxial with the handle, the second segment including a first sideways hook and a second sideways hook, the sideways hooks being spaced longitudinally from each other, the first sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a first direction and the second sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a second direction, wherein the first direction is different from the second direction;

manipulating the rod so as to slide the sideways hook around the artery; and

pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue.

Claim 2 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the first direction is opposite from the second direction ~~sideways hook and the second sideways hook extend from the rod in opposing directions.~~

Claim 3 (Currently amended): A method for separating or dissecting an artery from surrounding tissue, said method comprising:

providing an instrument having a handle and a long slender rod including first and second

segments that define an obtuse angle therebetween, at least one of the segments being substantially coaxial with the handle, the second segment including a first sideways hook and a second sideways hook, the sideways hooks being spaced longitudinally from each other, the first sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a first direction and the second sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a second direction, wherein the first direction is different from the second direction:

manipulating the rod so as to slide the sideways hook around the artery and engage the artery with the hook; and

separating the artery by pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue.

Claim 4 (Currently amended): The method of claim 3, wherein the first direction is opposite from the second direction ~~sideways hook and the second sideways hook extend from the rod in opposing directions.~~

Claim 5 (Currently amended): A method for harvesting an artery from the body, said method comprising:

making a small incision in the skin in the vicinity of the artery;

providing an instrument having a handle and a long slender rod including first and second segments that define an obtuse angle therebetween, at least one of the segments being substantially coaxial with the handle, the second segment including a first sideways hook and a second sideways hook, the sideways hooks being spaced longitudinally from each other, the first sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a first direction and the

second sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a second direction, wherein the first direction is different from the second direction;

inserting the hooked end of the rod into the small incision until the hooked end is in the vicinity of the artery;

manipulating the rod to slide the hook around the artery; and

pushing and or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery to separate the artery from surrounding tissue.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): The method of claim 5, wherein the first direction is opposite from the second direction ~~sideways hook and the second sideways hook extend from the rod in opposing directions.~~

Claim 7 (Currently amended): A method of harvesting an artery, said method comprising:

making an incision through the skin in the vicinity of the artery;

inserting a tunneling device into the incision to create a tunnel along the artery;

insufflating the tunnel by placing a seal at the incision, and injecting gas or liquid through the seal;

providing a long slender rod including first and second segments that define an obtuse angle therebetween, said second segment having a first sideways hook and a second sideways hook, the sideways hooks being spaced longitudinally from each other, the first sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a first direction and the second sideways hook extending radially outward from the second segment in a second direction, wherein the first direction is different from the second direction;

inserting the rod, hooked end first, into the tunnel through the seal;
manipulating the rod to slide the hook around the artery; and
pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery to separate the artery from its surrounding tissue.

Claim 8 (Currently amended): The method of claim 7, wherein the first direction is opposite from the second direction ~~sideways hook and the second sideways hook extend from the rod in opposing directions.~~

Claim 9 (Previously presented): The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

providing the long slender rod with a long tube surrounding the rod, said tube extending over a longitudinal segment of the rod, said tube mated to the rod in an airtight manner to inhibit air or fluid from flowing between the tube and the rod;

inserting the long slender rod, with the long tube surrounding the rod, into the tunnel through the seal.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The method of claim 9 further comprising the steps of providing the long slender rod with a means for sealing any space between the rod and the seal to inhibit the flow of gas or fluid between the rod and the seal.

Claim 11 (Canceled).

Claim 12 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the sideways hooks defines an arc of about 180° to about 270° .

Claim 13 (Previously presented): The method of claim 3, wherein at least one of the sideways hooks defines an arc of about 180° to about 270° .

Claim 14 (Previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein at least one of the sideways hooks defines an arc of about 180° to about 270° .

Claim 15 (Previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein at least one of the sideways hooks defines an arc of about 180° to about 270° .